At least 42 killed in attack on refugee base in Central African Republic

November 18, 2018

By [Peter Stubley](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/peter-stubley)

The Independent

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/attack-refugee-camp-militia-central-african-republic-alindao-seleka-anti-balaka-a8639206.html>

At least 42 people were killed in an attack on a Catholic mission sheltering 20,000 refugees in the [Central African Republic](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/central-african-republic), according to officials.

The camp in the town of Alindao, around 300km east of the capital [Bangui](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bangui), was set on fire on Thursday following clashes between two rival armed groups.

Thousands were forced to flee their homes during the violence and dozens were left injured. A priest is among the dead.

“We have counted 42 bodies so far, but we are still searching for others,” said Etienne Godenaha, a politician from Alindao.

“The camp has been burnt to the ground and people fled into the bush and to other IDP (internally displaced person) camps in the city.”

The attack prompted the [UN](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/un)peacekeeping mission (MINUSCA) to send additional forces to the area to prevent further fighting between armed elements affiliated with the Christian anti-Balakas and the mainly-Muslim UPC Selekas.

MINUSCA [said in a statement](https://www.minusca.unmissions.org/la-minusca-denonce-les-affrontements-entre-elements-armes-alindao): “The Alindao events again highlight the irresponsibility and contempt of the UPC and the anti-Balaka for civilians, including the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force.

“We condemn the perpetrators of this violence and reminds all belligerents that all those involved in these events, as well as their leaders, are individually and collectively responsible for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.”

A former leader of the anti-Balaka movement was [handed over to the International Criminal Court to face trial for war crimes](https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=pr1418) on Saturday.

Alfred Yekatom, a sitting member of parliament once nicknamed “Rambo”, is said to be responsible for the murder, torture, imprisonment and deportation of Muslims in the CAR between December 2013 and August 2014.

Thousands have died and a fifth of Central African Republic’s 4.5m population have fled their homes during the conflict which broke out after the Seleka rebels ousted President Francois Bozize in 2013.

Despite electing a new leader in 2016, the country has continued to face political instability and tit-for-tat inter-communal violence.

On Friday night a Tanzanian peacekeeper was killed during an attack by Siriri militia on the UN temporary operating base in the village of Gbambia, in the southwest of CAR.

“MINUSCA condemns this cowardly attack and recalls that any attack against  peacekeepers may constitute a war crime and be subject to prosecution by national or international judicial authorities,” [said the peacekeeping force in a statement](https://www.minusca.unmissions.org/en/minusca-peacekeeper-killed-central-african-republic).